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NOTES.

JE NE SACHE PAS, AGAIN.

In the second number of this Journal (Vol. 1, p. 197), I published a note on the French so-called dubitative subjunctive, *je ne sache pas* in the principal clause; and in the fourth number (Vol. 1, p. 460), Mr. A. Lodeman criticized my theory, which claimed an indicative origin for this *sache*. My reply, prepared several months since, has been kept back by press of other matter.

Mr. Lodeman first takes me to task for saying by implication that *je ne sache pas* was equivalent to *je ne sais pas*, and adds: "but whoever has observed how Frenchmen use the phrase in question, knows that such is not the case." When I gave it to be understood that I regarded the two expressions as virtual equivalents, I acted on the authority of the French Academy, in whose dictionary the following note occurs, under *savoir*:

"*Je ne sache personne*, je ne connais personne; *je ne sache rien de si beau*, *je ne sache rien de mieux écrit*, etc., je ne sais rien, je ne connais rien" . . .

To assure myself, however, that I had put the right interpretation upon these words, I consulted a native professor of French, whose opinion is paramount to all non-native speculation. He coincided with me in my understanding of the Academy's teaching, and added further that he himself could not feel any difference between *je ne sache pas* and *je ne sais pas*; that the former was an indicative in force, if subjunctive in form, and he did not believe that any one could really say there was an appreciable difference between the two.

This is implied in the fact that *je ne sache pas* is rarely, if ever, heard in every-day life, although Mr. Lodeman would lead us to infer that the expression is daily heard from the lips of natives. The need of it is not felt and its use is considered pedantic. These circumstances seriously militate against his words that "this distinction is universally felt and recognized by Frenchmen," and that "in the case of this verb [*savoir*] French-speaking people feel the need of a still milder form of expression."

In the second place, Mr. Lodeman thinks I did not do justice to Littré, when criticizing his teaching with reference to the derivation of the form *sache*. Let us see whether such is the case.

According to Littré, some one had maintained that *sache* was the indicative "représentant *sapio*." And his rejoinder to this was: "L'explication (namely, that *sache* represents *sapio*) ne peut être admise, car *sapio* a donné *sai*; et *sache* vient de *sapiam*," which is a mere assertion and no proof. I, therefore, can not see what violence I did to Littré's words by taking them in the most obvious sense. Moreover, we are by no means so certain that *sapio* gave *sai*. My reasons for doubting this may be partially found in my former article. I briefly sum them up here with some additions. The common resultant in French of a lip-sound followed immediately by a palatal *i* is a *consonne chuintante*; we should consequently expect *sache* from *sapio*; whereas *sai* was formed on the French infinitive *savoir*, or on a Romance form *sapo*, which probably went through *savo*, *sav*, *saiv*, to *sai*. *Sapo* is not merely hypothetical; it occurs in early Italian, and gave *so* through *savo* (I have found *savere* and *savete*), *sao*.

Again, Mr. Lodeman is "inclined to think" that in pronouncing purely conjectural Mr. Littré's explanation of *je ne sache pas* by a preceding *j'ose dire*, I "overlooked" the quotation from Paré: "Aussi osé-je dire que je ne sache homme si chatouilleux," etc. To this I reply that I considered the explanation so trivial as not to be worth noticing. If any "overlooking" has been done, Mr. Lodeman is the offender, not I; for Littré expressly says, when referring to the sentence in Paré: "*On peut conjecturer* que ceux qui les premiers l'ont employée ont sous-entendu: *j'ose dire*," etc. Consequently what I said was only a translation of Littré's own words.

Further on, Mr. Lodeman declares that the uniqueness of the construction *je ne sache pas* is not very startling to him, and that its peculiarity consists in the tense and not in the mood. But it is precisely in the latter that the difficulty lies. If the expression were *je ne susse pas*, it would not be so hard to explain. Being a present tense, I fail to see its analogy with *non dixerim*, Greek optative with *ἄν*, etc.; for *non dixerim* and *ὅτι ἄν λέγοιμι* have their analogy in *je ne dirais pas*, where there is suppressed some such protasis as: *si on me demandait mon opinion*. And so German: *ich wuesste nicht* (i. e. *wenn man mich fragte*); whereas it would be no more logical to understand a protasis with *je ne sache pas*

than with *je ne sais pas*. If we could say in German *ich wisse nicht*, the analogical argument might have some force ; as it is, it has none.

Mr. Lodeman continues: "In French too, the conditional (according to Diez, a tense of subjunctive mood) of various verbs is used to express an affirmation doubtfully," and cites as one of the examples: *Je ne saurais vous le dire*. Then right in the next sentence he contradicts himself by saying that *je ne saurais* has the meaning of *je ne puis, je ne peux*, which certainly is not a doubtful affirmation.

And again, I do not understand Diez to teach that the conditional is a "tense of the subjunctive." My edition of Diez at least reads: "Vermoege derselben methode schuf man ferner mit *habebam* ein zweites tempus, *das seiner bedeutung nach ungefaehr dem lat. imperfect des conjunctivs entspricht*"; and that practice had established the name *conditional*, "weil es im bedingungssatz eine rolle spielt, wiewohl dieser name nichts weniger als zutreffend ist."

In treating of the conditional Mr. Lodeman says that the use of *sache* and *saurais* (= *je ne puis, je ne peux*) seems to have originated about the same period, *i. e.* in the XVIth century, as he accepts Littré's theory. Here I am sure Mr. Lodeman stands alone ; and he may continue to believe he is right ; what I object to is that he should use his own oversight as an argument against me. If he had given himself a little trouble, he might have ascertained that, in more than one of the Romance languages, from a very early date, *savoir* in most of its moods and tenses has been interchangeable with *pouvoir*.

Examples:

Ahi Dio, che sembra quando gli occhi gira ?
Dicalo Amor, ch'io nol *saprei* contare.

(Guido Cavalcanti, XIII cent.)

Assez en *sauroie* nommer.

(Guiot de Provins, *La Bible*, bet. 1203 and 1208.)

Here *saprei* and *sauroie* are used exactly as they are at the present day. In lines 1431 and 2138 of *La Bible*, *sauroie* has the force of *porroie*. The same usage in Joinville's *Histoire de Saint Louis* (chap. 134): . . . *se il ne savait aussi hardiement et aussi durement escondire comme il sauroit donner.*

And so in Provençal:

Que fesson devezir,
A cui que mielh taisses,
Que cascus nom n'ages
Per so que *saupra* far.

(Guiraut Riquier, XIII cent.)

As instances of *savoir* for *pouvoir* in other tenses may be noted :

Une chalur ki pas ne se *seet* atemprer.

(Math. Paris, Vie de Seint Auban.)

A si *sabe* dar omildança a Alfonsso so señor . . .

(Poema del Cid, l. 2024.)

A se lograr da paz com tanta gloria

Quanta *soube* ganhar na dura guerra.

(Camoens, Os Lus. III 118.)

Take it all in all, I have not been able to discover what bearing this whole discussion of the conditional has on *je ne sache pas*. I have only referred to it, in order to expose the fallacy of Mr. Lodeman's reasoning, and to show him that with the early Romance peoples, as with the Teutonic (Goth. *kunnan* and *kannjan*, Eng. *ken* and *can*, Germ. *kennen* and *koennen*, etc.), our trite adage, 'knowledge is power,' was a deep-felt reality.

Mr. Lodeman seems to attribute to the verb *savoir* some peculiar meaning. What this meaning is he does not tell us. What is there specially significant or mysterious in *savoir* that is not contained in *connaître*? If Frenchmen so universally feel the necessity of toning down *je ne sais rien* into *je ne sache rien*, by the "softening" process, so much insisted on by Mr. Lodeman, I can not see why the same necessity has not been felt of putting *je ne connais rien* through the softening mill and making it *je ne connaisse rien*. Moreover, if Mr. Lodeman's theory be true, why is not *nous ne savons pas* softened to *nous ne sachions pas*? There would be more reason in this; for a speaker in giving his own opinion could be more sure of his knowledge than when representing the thoughts and feelings of the individuals contained in *nous*, and consequently a less direct mode of expression could be reasonably expected.

I come now to the closing paragraph of Mr. Lodeman's communication. As I distinctly stated, in summing up, that I laid no great stress on what I said in respect to a double inflection of the present tense of *savoir*, it was hardly worth his while to criticize it. However, in his eagerness to score a point against me, he puts down *sappia* as the imperative of the Italian *sapere*, apparently not knowing that it was not the imperative, but the third person of the subjunctive, which, in Italian proper, is the polite form of address of all verbs. Without entering here into this subject of imperative and subjunctive, it is sufficient to remark

that in view of the multitude of forms and of the uncertainty as to the origin and growth of these forms, it would be rash in any one to express a too decided opinion regarding any individual form, without a careful and prolonged study of its history.

In the next sentence Mr. Lodeman makes a statement which, I am sure, will prove a new revelation to most scholars, namely, that "not a trace is left" in Italian of a second form of the indicative present. The early oracles of the language, as seen in the following citations, tell a different story:

Questo è mio giuoco ed altra giuocar non *sappo* (= so).
(Guittone d'Arezzo.)

E che si fesse rimembrar non *sape* (= sa).
(Dante, Par. XXIII 45.)

E *sapemo* (= sappiamo) che amore privato ismisuramente chiude l'occhio del cuore.
(Ammaestramenti degli Antichi.)

Lo Trebuno lo mandò in Cesaria, *sappiendo* (= sapendo) ch'egli era voluto torre da' Giudei.
(Domenico Cavalca.)

Same form of the gerund in Boccaccio, Nov. 42. Nay more, the very form I had assumed as the natural Gallic outgrowth of *sapio*, I find to be quite common in early Italian.

Non *saccio* (= so) vero consiglio alcuno che il vostro.
(Guittone d'Arezzo.)

Temo morire e già non *saccio* (=so) l'ora. (Boccaccio).

Con un *saccente* (=sapiente) barattiere si convenne del prezzo. (Boccaccio).

These surely may be called traces of a second, and even a third form of the present indicative of *sapere*.

Continuing his theme of the identity of the imperative and subjunctive of *savoir, sapere*, Mr. Lodeman asks if this exception is not attributable rather to the meaning of this verb, "which," he says, "does not admit of an imperative in the same sense as the majority of other verbs." Unfortunately for this theory, it seems never to have occurred, even unconsciously, to the French people, to fit whose delicate sensibilities it was created; for at the time they were making their language, when only it would apply, we find them using the regular indicative form.

Saivez ke deus ait an covant
A ceaz ki se vorront creusier.
(Chanson de Croisade, XII cent.)

Seignor, ce dist li rois, *savez* que je vous di.
(Berte aus grans piés, 2598.)

On the other hand, is the subjunctive a milder imperative than the indicative? I think not. The Latin subjunctive had already acquired an imperative force, before the Romance peoples fell heir to it. (*Vos*) *amatis me*, therefore, must have seemed to them a milder form of command than (*vos*) *ametis me*. In English we observe the same mode of expression when we say *you do this*, or *you will do this*, instead of the abrupt *do this*.

SAMUEL GARNER.

VARIA.

I.—*Parodies and Resemblances*.—In the fourth number of this Journal I called attention to the resemblance between Aristoph. Acharn. 790 and Soph. Antig. 513, not venturing positively to pronounce the former a parody on the latter. I am now convinced that it is not a parody upon that particular passage, but is a sort of παρατραγωδία. The mode of expression found in the two verses seems to have been a common one, so common that absolute identity of words would have been requisite, perhaps, to remind the audience of any particular verse that they had heard. Accordingly, I find in Euripides a verse which is, in some respects, more like the verse of Aristophanes than is that of Sophocles. It is Iph. Taur. 800:

ὦ συγκασιγνήτη τε καὶ ταύτοῦ πατρός.

If now we compare v. 497:

πότερον ἀδελφὸν μητρός ἔστων ἐκ μιᾶς;

and the two verses under discussion:

ῥμαιμος ἐκ μιᾶς τε καὶ ταύτοῦ πατρός—

ῥμομητρία γάρ ἔστι κῆρ τῷ πατρός—

and bear in mind that the Iph. Taur. was probably produced after the Acharn., it becomes almost certain that the expression in question was merely a species of circumstantiality frequently employed by those who affected lofty speech. (Cf. Herc. Fur. 843, Phoen. 156. In Nub. 1372 ῥμομητρίαν is used for a special reason.) If this expression were found only in the Acharn. and the Iph. Taur. it would probably be regarded as sufficient grounds for placing the latter chronologically before the former, an illustration of the caution necessary in attempting to draw conclusions from limited data.